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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1763  
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI PRIORITY 5722  
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 003143

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [MOPS](#) [TH](#)  
SUBJECT: THAI PRIME MINISTER SOMCHAI DISREGARDS ARMY  
COMMANDER'S SUGGESTION HE RESIGN

REF: A. BANGKOK 3119 (NO COUP)  
[1](#)B. BANGKOK 3071 (OCTOBER 10 UPDATE)

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. James F. Entwistle, reason: 1.4  
(b, d).

SUMMARY AND COMMENT  
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[1](#)1. (C) Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat on October 17 declined to resign, called for public unity in advance of upcoming events of national importance, and he called for the public to await an independent commission's report on the violent confrontation between police and protesters on October 7. Somchai's press conference followed Army Commander Anupong Paojinda's public remarks on October 16 that Somchai should resign to take responsibility for the October 7 clash. A close Thaksin associate told the Charge d'Affaires that no benefit would ensue were Somchai to resign; this contact implied the Queen was trying to create conditions conducive to a coup. A palace official associated with the Queen hinted at significant developments to come. Hundreds of anti-government protesters held a peaceful rally in central Bangkok on the morning of October 17.

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: Somchai made his public remarks in a modest and non-confrontational manner. Nevertheless, he clearly indicated his intent to allow appropriate procedures to run their course and to disregard Anupong's suggestion that he resign. Anupong may have hoped he could ameliorate the current polarized political environment by nudging Somchai from office. With Somchai refusing to step down, the key questions looking forward appear to be whether the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) will attempt to precipitate more violence, how much harder royalist associates are willing to push, and whether Anupong will continue to resist pressures to drag the military back into politics. End Summary and Comment.

PM NOT STEPPING DOWN, CALLS FOR UNITY  
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13. (SBU) Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat, flanked by leading members of the governing coalition, held a press conference on the afternoon of October 17 to explain his perspective on recent events in the wake of calls by military leaders for him to resign. Somchai stressed that the constitution obliged him to present his administration's policies at the parliament, and it was in order to facilitate this requirement that the police had confronted protesters blocking access to the parliament on October 7. Somchai explained that an independent commission was investigating the clash, and it was important to await the results of the commission's work. Noting that his administration consisted of democratically elected representatives of the people, Somchai called for national unity in advance of important upcoming events, including the upcoming funeral ceremonies for the King's elder sister (mid-November), celebrations of the King's birthday (early December), and the ASEAN summit (mid December). Somchai said the best way forward would be to proceed with constitutional reform, indicating new elections could take place after amendment.

#### ANUPONG SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT RESIGNATION

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4.", S]xQOctober  
7 violent clash between PAD protesters and police: "If the government orders (police use of force that appeared excessive), it must take responsibility. This (statement) is not meant to pressure the government, but someone has to show responsibility. No one can stay in a pool of blood." Anupong went on to say that, were he the current Prime

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Minister, he would resign.

#### THAKSIN INSIDER: NO POINT IN SOMCHAI QUITTING

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15. (C) Charge spoke with Thaksin loyalist Yongyuth Tiypairath on October 17. Yongyuth stressed there was nothing to be gained from PM Somchai resigning in the face of pressure from his critics, as this step would not resolve the social conflict in Thailand. Charge asked whether Yongyuth anticipated a military coup. Yongyuth vaguely implied that Queen Sirikit was trying to create an environment conducive to such an event, but stated that no one wanted a coup. Yongyuth recommended, as Somchai did, waiting for the results of the investigation into the events of October 7.

#### ROYALIST HINTS AT DRAMA TO COME

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16. (C) Anuporn Kashemsant, a foreign liaison officer for the Queen in the Principal Private Secretary's office, remarked to us October 17 that various political maneuvers were ongoing. He said "a coup like what happened September 19, 2006 is not one of the options" for resolving Thailand's political crisis, because the military had proven it was incapable of running the country. His qualification evoked the remark of former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun on October 16 (ref A) to Charge that there would not be "a coup in the traditional sense of the word." Anuporn hinted that significant developments likely would take place in the coming days, but refused to predict what might occur, beyond saying there were two possible paths forward.

#### ANTI-GOVERNMENT RALLY

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17. (SBU) Members of the PAD held an anti-government rally in central Bangkok on the morning of October 17, handing out VCDs and booklets charging the police with having "killed the people" on October 7. We observed the rally, which was peaceful and at times festive. Very few police officials were in close proximity to the demonstration, although they told us riot police stood in reserve nearby. The police and

protesters showed no sign of antagonism. Police estimated  
the crowd size at 500-600.  
ENTWISTLE